

SECRET
BRIEFING

1 December 1964

SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

- I. Ouster of General Hinh highlights Bao Dai's growing tendency to throw in lot with Diem.
 - A. Immediate cause of action presumably Hinh's statement to press he would return Saigon whatever Bao Dai's decision may be.
 - B. Terms of dismissal decree, charging Hinh with disobedience, indicate Bao Dai abandoning earlier equivocal stand.
- II. Army-government reconciliation will not result automatically, Hinh capable of causing further trouble.
 - A. Once stated he would oppose Diem politically if fired.
 - B. Recently boasted he could carry out coup from Paris by telegram.
 - C. Reportedly had systematically begun putting his own men in as unit commanders before leaving for Paris.
 - D. Tension within army still high despite smoothing over of recent pro-Diem demonstration.
 - E. General Hinh recently voiced suspicion that acting chief of staff Vy had sworn loyalty to Hinh, expressed fear Diem-Hinh feud might be replaced by Diem-Vy dispute.

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- Vy does in fact lack Diem's confidence.
- III. Actually, Hinh is political lightweight, but French backing could offset this.
- A. French officials who have backed Hinh could switch to other anti-Diem champions.
 - B. French army officers have vested interest in continuance of anti-Diem feeling in army, since Diem favors US takeover of training responsibility.
 - C. Recent official French broadcast from Saigon criticized Diem, warned Viets against "heavy hand" of US. Vietnam army radio, before and since Hinh's departure, has followed same line. NO
- IV. Meanwhile, Viet Minh making capital of chaos in south.
- A. Viet Minh propagandists exploiting Vietnam army radio criticism of Diem as instance of US bolstering of unpopular government.
 - B. Viet Minh continuing to consolidate shadow government over much of southern Vietnam despite formal troop withdrawal.